

PENDILLS CREEK/SULLIVAN CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY COMPLEX

Our Facilities

Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery is located along Lake Superior, approximately 17 minutes west from Brimley, Michigan. Pendills Creek NFH is a lake trout production facility and was established in 1951 to stock the Great Lakes. Lake trout are raised from eggs, and are reared for approximately 14 months, then are released into Lake Michigan and Huron. Currently, Pendills is able to raise approximately 1 million lake trout.

Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery is 15 miles west of Brimley, located south of M-28, on US Forest Service Road 3134, which is branched off of US Forest Service Road 3131. Sullivan Creek NFH was established in 1934 and is a lake trout brood stock facility. The brood stock located at Sullivan Creek NFH are from wild parents, and are maintained to provide approximately 5-7 million eggs for hatcheries to continue the restoration efforts.

Bay Mills Community College Visits Sullivan Creek NFH

On Thursday, October 18, the environmental science class of Bay Mills Community College visited Sullivan Creek NFH to tour the spawning process. The students were intrigued by the Service's mission and the science behind raising lake trout. The students were eagerly taking notes while James Anderson conducted the tour. The tour included observing the spawning

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process of females from the 2005 Huron Parry Sound Wild (HPW) spawned, and crossed with the males of 2006 HPW, as well as the approximate 6 million fertilized eggs in the egg building.

Figure 1 Biologist James Anderson rinsing the eggs after fertilization

- Julie Timmer
Administrative Officer

Students Tour Hatchery

Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery recently hosted a tour of its facility to students from the University of Shiga Prefecture (USP) in Japan. The students are part of a three week summer program between Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and the University of Shiga Prefecture. LSSU provides Shiga Prefecture's undergraduate students field experience in Environmental Science. USP wishes to avail its students of the opportunity to obtain experience in the Lake Superior watershed and adjacent areas. The tour was conducted by Biological Science Technician Randy Obermiller. Accompanying the students were LSSU facility members Dr. Ashley Moerke, Associate Professor of Biology and Roger Greil, Aquatic Research Lab Manager.

The students toured the hatchery's raceway building which houses lake trout fingerlings. Although the coded-wire-tagging of Pendills Creek fingerlings had been completed the previous day, a mass marking trailer was still on site for the students to walk through. Inside the trailer, students were shown how the fingerlings are processed and receive a code-wire-tag and an adipose fin clip identifying them as a hatchery raised fish. The group also viewed the hatchery's water filtration systems including the traveling screen and drum filtration systems.

The tour group comprised both undergraduate and graduate students majoring in several fields of study including Ecosystem Studies in Environmental Science, Environmental Policy, Planning in Environmental Science, Regional Studies in Human Science, Design and Architecture in Environmental Science, Human Relations in Human Culture, Food Science and Nutrition, and Mechanical Systems Engineering.

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The students had many questions and it was a pleasure to take the time to answer those questions and show them our facility.

Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery, founded in 1951, is located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula near Brimley, MI. on Lake Superior. The facility rears yearling lake trout to be released as part of the Great Lakes Restoration Program. Hatchery production includes 1,000,000 fish released into Lake Michigan each spring.

- *Randy Obermiller*
Biological Science Technician

Public Enjoys Lake Trout Brood Fish on Display

Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery partnered with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to stock excess lake trout brood fish into Palms Book State Park, also known as Big Springs or Kitchi-Ti-Kipi.

The spring is a giant 40 foot deep natural spring that pumps out 10,000 gallons per minute and has a constant 45 degree water temperature. The park has a floating raft that the public can travel out on to view the spring. The spring flows into Indian Lake which, along with Big Springs, is located in Schoolcraft County just north of Thompson, Michigan.

On August 8, 2012 Sullivan Creek NFH stocked 100 lake trout brood into the spring for public



viewing during their visit to the park. The hatchery provided 50 2002 Seneca Lake Wild (SLW) which averaged 9 pounds and 27 inches in length and 50 2003 Seneca Lake Wild (SLW) which averaged 10 pounds and 28 inches in length.

Figure 2 Viewing deck at Big Springs

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To stock the fish into the spring, a large metal tub on wheels is filled with water then the fish are loaded into the tub and wheeled down the access path to the visitor viewing dock and hand released into the spring. Fish Biologist James Anderson, Animal Caretaker Tony Wizauer and Youth Conservation Corps worker Kyle Friez performed the daunting task of stocking the excess lake trout into the spring on this day.



Figure 3 Anthony Wizauer (in yellow) and Kyle Friez hauling brood fish to Big Springs

Usually when the hatchery has stocked the fish in the past, it has been during non-peak visitor hours. On this day the hatchery staff received a lot of attention from the public who

were curious about the lake trout and our stocking effort. The hatchery staff took the opportunity to inform the public about lake trout and Sullivan Creek NFH, our partnership with the State of Michigan to find a home for our excess lake trout brood fish and the Fish and Wildlife Service in general. Overall this was a win-win situation for everyone with the public getting the opportunity to view the stocking and seeing the lake trout enjoy their new home.

- *James Anderson*
Fish Biologist

Sullivan Creek NFH Finishes Lake Trout Egg Take for 2012

The whole egg collection and spawning process usually starts by the middle of September and runs until the beginning of November each year. Spawning season is a very busy time of year for the hatchery crew; Jordan River NFH and Iron River NFH help out during our two busiest weeks. This year's take began on September 19, and will plan to finish on October 31; that is seven weeks of checking mature female lake trout for the ripeness of their eggs and spawning the females and males to produce "green eggs".

For fall 2012 spawning season, we will have collected eggs from 2,023 mature female lake trout, and should be just shy of 10 million green eggs. The eggs will slowly develop inside incubators for one to three months



Figure 4 James Anderson spawning male lake trout

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depending on how cold the water temperatures are, and will become “eyed eggs”. The next step, from the middle of November to the end of December, is to run all the eyed eggs



Figure 5 John Shuman spawning Helga, a female lake trout

through mechanical egg pickers which have a light sensitive photo-eye. The pickers shoot a ray of light through each egg, and if the light goes through the egg, it is a good egg and goes in one bucket; if the light cannot go through the egg, it is a bad egg and goes into a different bucket. We run all our eggs through two mechanical pickers and hand pick them with tweezers or suction bulbs at least once. The good eyed eggs are again measured and put back in their incubators until shipments can be set up.

We are expecting to ship almost 6 million eyed eggs to other Federal, State, Tribal, and University facilities this fall; including the Michigan DNR, Wisconsin DNR, US Geological Survey, Jordan River NFH, Iron River NFH, and Pendills Creek NFH.

- *Crystal LeGault-Anderson*
Assistant Project Leader

Boy Scouts Take over Sullivan Creek NFH

Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery was originally built in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in the 1930s and utilized by the U.S. Forest Service until World War II. Sullivan Creek became a sub-station of Pendills Creek NFH in 1959. Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) were historically a top native fish predator in the Great Lakes. A combination of over-fishing, the parasitic Sea Lamprey, and other contributing factors caused the extinction of Lake Trout in all of the Great Lakes except for greatly reduced populations in Lake Superior and an isolated remnant population in Lake Huron.

Sullivan Creek NFH is a dedicated pathogen free lake trout brood station and produces up to eight million lake trout eyed eggs for shipment to other federal, state, and tribal facilities for the Great Lakes Lake Trout Restoration Program. Retired and excess lake trout brood are stocked into inland lakes for recreational fishing opportunities.

On Saturday morning October 20, 2012, a group of 10 Boy Scouts and 4 Troop Leaders were given a tour of the brood rearing facility at Sullivan Creek NFH by James Anderson and Tim Falconer.

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The tour group enjoyed seeing “Bertha”, “Helga”, and the rest of the breeding Lake Trout almost as much as they enjoyed the newly fertilized eggs. A few of the adventurous Boy Scouts found a couple of spilled eggs on the ground and were convinced, in their own minds, that by taking the dried out eggs home, they could raise their own Lake Trout.

- *Timothy Falconer*
Fish Biologist

(Our newest addition to the staff
here at Pendills/Sullivans
complex - introduction article coming next month!)

News from Friends of Pendills Creek Hatchery

The FPCH held their annual picnic on August 25, and had a great turnout. At the picnic, a meeting was held to elect the new officers of the board. The election results: Christine McCoy, reelected as President Bobbie Preston, reelected as Treasurer, Phyllis Taylor, reelected as Secretary, and Molly McGrail elected as Vice President. FPCH held their first meeting directed by the new board members on September 20. The Friends group will have a booth at the Brimley Craft Show on November 3, from 10 am to 3 pm. There was also discussion on planning to host a snowmobile open house again this year, during the weekend of the I-500 race in February. The Christmas Party will be held on December 1, at the Bay Mills Township Hall.



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